

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, December 4, 1909

Beinn Bereagh, Near Baddeck, Nova Scotia. December 4, 1909. Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, Twin Oaks, Woodley Lane, Washington , D. C. Dear Mabel:

Great excitement here over the approaching visit of His Excellency Earl Grey, Governor-General of Canada to examine work of Baldwin and McCurdy. Hitherto the communications have been in the form of confidential letters and telegrams from the Minister of Labor at Ottawa to Douglas McCurdy; but this morning there came a direct communication from the Aid-de-Camp of Earl Grey in the form of the following telegram:—

Montreal, Dec. 3. To J.A.D. McCurdy:— His Excellency will reach Grand Narrows 5.26 a.m. Dec. 8 and will be ready to leave 9 a.m. Please write Amherst what arrangements have been made. (Signed) A.D.C.

McCurdy and Baldwin are out at Camp today getting the machine in order for a trial. It is too bad that I have made all my arrangements to start on Monday, the 6th, for Washington, so that I shall miss the visit of His Excellency here. However, it is perhaps just as well as it gives Baldwin and McCurdy the opportunity of standing upon their own feet. Kathleen will do the honors of the occasion I have no doubt in a most graceful manner; and altogether it is the most fortunate thing in the world for the boys that they will be brought into contact with the Governor — General of Canada without anyone to step in between 2 and yet we find it advisable to limit his veto -power. It certainly seems strange to Americans that the people of Great Britain should tolerate the existence of an absolute veto power over legislation in the hands of a body of men not subject to election, and therefore, irresponsible to anybody for their exercise of power.

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The abolition of the House of Lords, however, or the substitution of an elective-chamber in its place, are both remedies of doubtful expediency, because they are revolutionary in character, and produce a sudden rupture in the continuity of historical development. R Evolution is surely preferable to r R evolution; and it might be wiser and safer at the present time to take a single step in the same direction which could be effected without breaking completely with the traditions of the past: Keep the House of Lords, and simply limit its veto power over L I legislation.

(signed) A British American Baddeck, Nova Scotia, December 4, 1909.